infrastructural and extension support to the sector through network of CSB's units and implementation of certain developmental/incentive/ financial assistance schemes for encouraging adoption of modern sericultural practices for production of quality silk.

Condition of Jute Industry

1518. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite India being the largest producer of jute and jute products the country has been facing a depressed market for the both the fibre and fabric in recent years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that production of raw jute is in a disorganized shape; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to improve the condition of jute industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Export of jute products has shown a decline during 1999-2000 particularly in major items sacking, yarn CBC due to competition from cheaper and lighter synthetic substitutes and also due to competition from Bangladesh. As regards export of raw jute, its quantity is very negligible.

(b) The reduction in the production of raw jute crop size is attributable to shrinkage in area in jute cultivation caused by unprecedented late arrival of monsoon in almost all jute growing states. With a view to ensure that the jute growers get remunerative prices, the Minimum Support Price for Jute for the current year has been raised from Rs. 650 per quital last year, to Rs. 750/quintal.

(c) Government have taken a number of steps to improve the condition of jute industry including launching of Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme, compliance of Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory use in Packing Commodities) Act, 1987, Participation in various Trade Fairs, and implementation of Export Market Assistance Scheme.